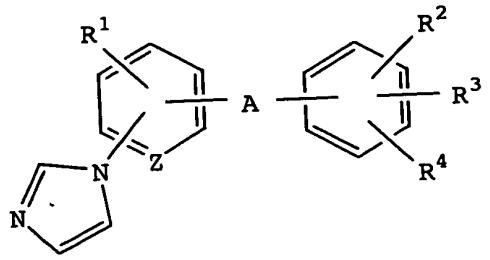
CLAIMS

1. A MAG expression promoter comprising a compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group;

R^2 and R^3 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group;

R^4 is an alkyl group, -COOH, $-COOR^5$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-CH_2NR^6R^7$, $-CH_2OH$ or $-CH_2OR^8$;

wherein R^5 and R^6 are each an alkyl group, and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group, or R^6 and R^7 in combination form imidazole together with the adjacent nitrogen atom;

A is -CH(OH)-, -C(=O)- or $-CH_2-$; and

Z is =CH- or =N-,

an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

2. The MAG expression promoter of claim 1, which is applicable to a disease of mammals inclusive of human, caused by hypomyelination.

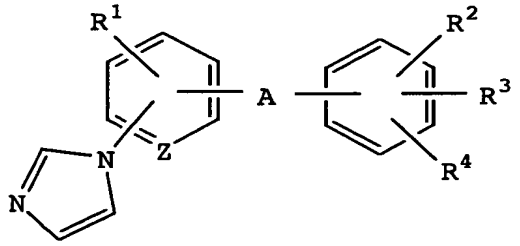
3. The MAG expression promoter of claim 1, which is applicable to a disease of mammals inclusive of human, which disease mainly presents dysmyelination or demyelination.

4. The MAG expression promoter of claim 1, which is applicable to a disease of mammals inclusive of human, which disease being multiple sclerosis, encephalitis, myelitis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculitis, heavy metal toxicosis, diphtheria toxicosis, hypothyroidism, metachromatic leukodegeneration or Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease.

5. The MAG expression promoter of any of claim 1 to claim 4, wherein, in the formula (I), R^1 is a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group.

6. A MAG expression promoter comprising 4-[α-hydroxy-5-(1-imidazolyl)-2-methylbenzyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid, an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

7. A method of promoting expression of MAG, which method comprises administering a compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group;

R^2 and R^3 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group;

R^4 is an alkyl group, $-COOH$, $-COOR^5$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-CH_2NR^6R^7$, $-CH_2OH$ or $-CH_2OR^8$;

wherein R^5 and R^6 are each an alkyl group, and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each is

a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group, or R^6 and R^7 in combination form imidazole together with the adjacent nitrogen atom;

A is -CH(OH)-, -C(=O)- or $-CH_2-$; and

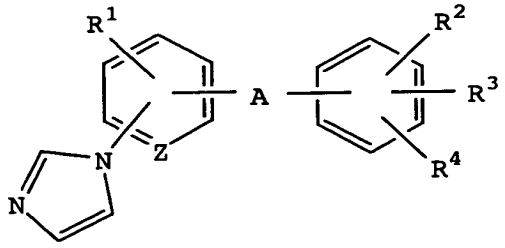
Z is =CH- or =N-,

an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to mammals inclusive of human.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein, in the formula (I), R^1 is a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group.

9. A method for promoting expression of MAG, which method comprises administering 4-[α-hydroxy-5-(1-imidazolyl)-2-methylbenzyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid, an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to mammals inclusive of human.

10. A method for prophylaxis and/or therapy of a disease caused by hypomyelination, which method comprises administering a compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group;

R^2 and R^3 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group;

R^4 is an alkyl group, -COOH, $-COOR^5$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-CH_2NR^6R^7$, $-CH_2OH$ or $-CH_2OR^8$;

wherein R^5 and R^6 are each an alkyl group, and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each is

a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group, or R^6 and R^7 in combination form imidazole together with the adjacent nitrogen atom;

A is -CH(OH)-, -C(=O)- or $-CH_2-$; and

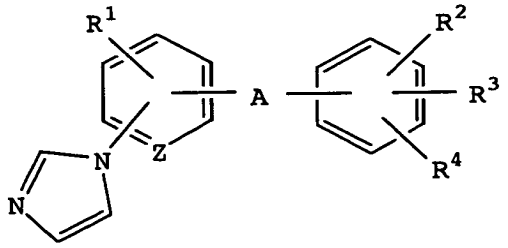
Z is =CH- or =N-,

an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to mammals inclusive of human.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein, in the formula (I), R^1 is a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group.

12. A method for prophylaxis and/or therapy of a disease caused by hypomyelination, which method comprises administering 4-[α-hydroxy-5-(1-imidazolyl)-2-methylbenzyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid, an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to mammals inclusive of human.

13. A method for prophylaxis and/or therapy of a disease mainly presenting dysmyelination or demyelination, which method comprises administering a compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group;

R^2 and R^3 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group;

R^4 is an alkyl group, -COOH, $-COOR^5$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-CH_2NR^6R^7$, $-CH_2OH$ or $-CH_2OR^8$;

wherein R^5 and R^6 are each an alkyl group, and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group, or R^6 and R^7 in combination form imidazole together with the adjacent nitrogen atom;

A is -CH(OH)-, -C(=O)- or $-CH_2-$; and

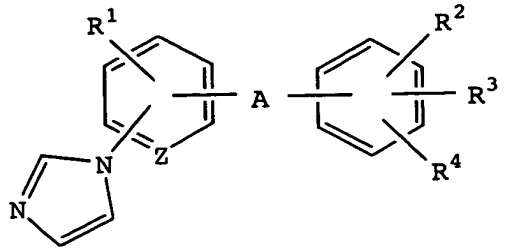
Z is =CH- or =N-,

an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to mammals inclusive of human.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein, in the formula (I), R^1 is a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group.

15. A method for prophylaxis and/or therapy of a disease mainly presenting dysmyelination or demyelination, which method comprises administering 4-[α-hydroxy-5-(1-imidazolyl)-2-methylbenzyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid, an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to mammals inclusive of human.

16. A method for prophylaxis and/or therapy of multiple sclerosis, encephalitis, myelitis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculitis, heavy metal toxicosis, diphtheria toxicosis, hypothyroidism, metachromatic leukodegeneration or Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, which method comprises administering a compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group;

R^2 and R^3 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group;

R^4 is an alkyl group, $-COOH$, $-COOR^5$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-CH_2NR^6R^7$, $-CH_2OH$ or $-CH_2OR^8$;

wherein R^5 and R^6 are each an alkyl group, and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group, or R^6 and R^7 in combination form imidazole together with the adjacent nitrogen atom;

A is $-CH(OH)-$, $-C(=O)-$ or $-CH_2-$; and

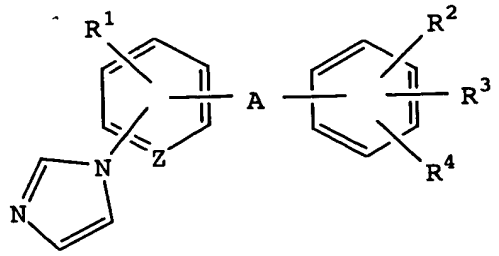
Z is $=CH-$ or $=N-$,

an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to mammals inclusive of human.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein, in the formula (I), R^1 is a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group.

18. A method for prophylaxis and/or therapy of multiple sclerosis, encephalitis, myelitis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculitis, heavy metal toxicosis, diphtheria toxicosis, hypothyroidism, metachromatic leukodegeneration or Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, which method comprises administering 4-[α-hydroxy-5-(1-imidazolyl)-2-methylbenzyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid, an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to mammals inclusive of human.

19. Use of a compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group;

R^2 and R^3 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group;

R^4 is an alkyl group, $-COOH$, $-COOR^5$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-CH_2NR^6R^7$, $-CH_2OH$ or $-CH_2OR^8$;

wherein R^5 and R^6 are each an alkyl group, and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group, or R^6 and R^7 in combination form imidazole together with the adjacent nitrogen atom;

A is $-CH(OH)-$, $-C(=O)-$ or $-CH_2-$; and

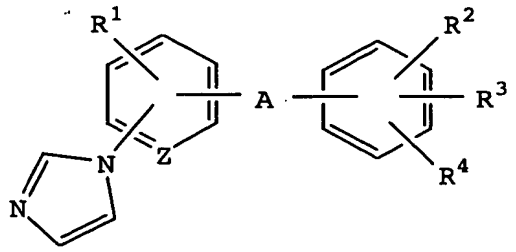
Z is $=CH-$ or $=N-$,

an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for producing a MAG expression promoter.

20. The use of claim 19, wherein, in the formula (I), R^1 is a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group.

21. Use of 4-[α-hydroxy-5-(1-imidazolyl)-2-methylbenzyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid, an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for producing a MAG expression promoter.

22. Use of a compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group;

R^2 and R^3 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group;

R^4 is an alkyl group, -COOH, $-COOR^5$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-CH_2NR^6R^7$, $-CH_2OH$ or $-CH_2OR^8$;

wherein R^5 and R^6 are each an alkyl group, and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group, or R^6 and R^7 in combination form imidazole together with the adjacent nitrogen atom;

A is -CH(OH)-, -C(=O)- or $-CH_2-$; and

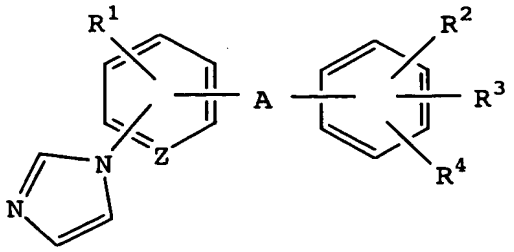
Z is =CH- or =N-,

an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for producing a MAG expression promoter applicable to a disease in mammals inclusive of human, which is caused by hypomyelination.

23. The use of claim 22, wherein, in the formula (I), R^1 is a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group.

24. Use of 4-[α-hydroxy-5-(1-imidazolyl)-2-methylbenzyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid, an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for producing a MAG expression promoter applicable to a disease in mammals inclusive of human, which is caused by hypomyelination.

25. Use of a compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group;

R^2 and R^3 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group;

R^4 is an alkyl group, $-COOH$, $-COOR^5$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-CH_2NR^6R^7$, $-CH_2OH$ or $-CH_2OR^8$;

wherein R^5 and R^6 are each an alkyl group, and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group, or R^6 and R^7 in combination form imidazole together with the adjacent nitrogen atom;

A is $-CH(OH)-$, $-C(=O)-$ or $-CH_2-$; and

Z is $=CH-$ or $=N-$,

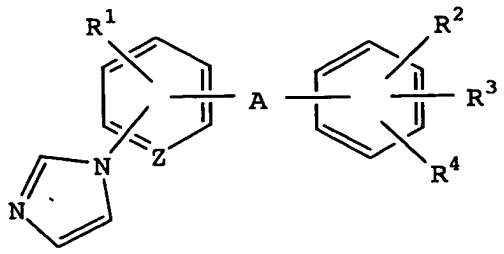
an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for producing a MAG expression promoter applicable to a disease in mammals inclusive of human, which mainly presents dysmyelination or demyelination.

26. The use of claim 25, wherein, in the formula (I), R^1 is a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group.

27. Use of 4-[α-hydroxy-5-(1-imidazolyl)-2-methylbenzyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid, an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for producing a MAG expression promoter applicable to a disease in mammals inclusive of human,

which mainly presents dysmyelination or demyelination.

28. Use of a compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group;

R^2 and R^3 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group;

R^4 is an alkyl group, $-COOH$, $-COOR^5$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-CH_2NR^6R^7$, $-CH_2OH$ or $-CH_2OR^8$;

wherein R^5 and R^6 are each an alkyl group, and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group, or R^6 and R^7 in combination form imidazole together with the adjacent nitrogen atom;

A is $-CH(OH)-$, $-C(=O)-$ or $-CH_2-$; and

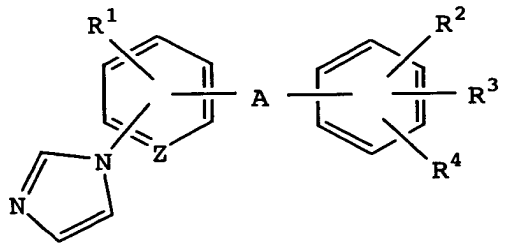
Z is $=CH-$ or $=N-$,

an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for producing a MAG expression promoter applicable to a disease in mammals inclusive of human, which is multiple sclerosis, encephalitis, myelitis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculitis, heavy metal toxicosis, diphtheria toxicosis, hypothyroidism, metachromatic leukodegeneration or Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease.

29. The use of claim 28, wherein, in the formula (I), R^1 is a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group.

30. Use of 4-[α-hydroxy-5-(1-imidazolyl)-2-methylbenzyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid, an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for producing a MAG expression promoter applicable to a disease in mammals inclusive of human, which is multiple sclerosis, encephalitis, myelitis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyradiculitis, heavy metal toxicosis, diphtheria toxicosis, hypothyroidism, metachromatic leukodegeneration or Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease.

31. A commercial package comprising a MAG expression promoter comprising a compound of the formula (I)



(I)

wherein

R^1 is a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group;

R^2 and R^3 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group;

R^4 is an alkyl group, $-COOH$, $-COOR^5$, $-CONR^6R^7$, $-CH_2NR^6R^7$, $-CH_2OH$ or $-CH_2OR^8$;

wherein R^5 and R^6 are each an alkyl group, and R^6 and R^7 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group, or R^6 and R^7 in combination form imidazole together with the adjacent nitrogen atom;

A is $-CH(OH)-$, $-C(=O)-$ or $-CH_2-$; and

Z is $=CH-$ or $=N-$,

an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and a written matter associated

therewith, the written matter stating that the MAG expression promoter can or should be used for promoting expression of MAG.

32. The commercial package of claim 31, wherein, in the formula (I), R^1 is a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an alkoxy group.

33. A commercial package comprising a MAG expression promoter comprising 4-[α-hydroxy-5-(1-imidazolyl)-2-methylbenzyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid, an optically active form thereof or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and a written matter associated therewith, the written matter stating that the MAG expression promoter can or should be used for promoting expression of MAG.